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# BCM maturity in the dairy sector: the advantage of operational readiness over analytical capabilities

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## Introduction and research aim

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is often associated with response and recovery plans, yet maturity extends beyond formal procedures. Lindström, Samuelsson, and Hägerfors (2010) argue that effective continuity planning is multi-level and reflects the development of organizational capabilities, requiring formalization, learning, and continuous improvement. Tworek, Bieńkowska, and Zabłocka-Kluczka (2019) show that BCM maturity is an important organizational characteristic and should be examined together with management mechanisms. Păunescu, Popescu, and Blid (2018) emphasize the role of business impact analysis (BIA) in identifying critical functions, resources, suppliers, and alternative solutions. This raises the question of whether BCM develops evenly or whether response capabilities advance faster than analytical capacities.

**The study aims** to assess BCM maturity in medium and large Polish dairy enterprises and identify operational–analytical disparities. **RQ1:** Is BCM maturity similar across management dimensions? **RQ2:** Which practices reveal the largest gap between operational readiness and analytical, monitoring, and anticipatory capabilities during disruptive events.

## Research methods

The study used a quantitative **CATI** design with purposive sampling, conducted between October 2025 and March 2026. The initial sampling frame comprised 60 key milk-processing enterprises in Poland, identified from the National Association of Dairy Cooperatives, industry databases, and sectoral rankings. The final sample included **30 enterprises** meeting three criteria: dairy-sector production activity, an established market position, and brand recognition. Medium-sized firms represented 56.7% of the sample and large firms 43.3%. Respondents were top-management representatives. The questionnaire covered ten BCM practices assessed on a five-point scale and seven maturity dimensions: strategy and leadership, processes and procedures, resources and competencies, risk analysis and BIA, operational plans and actions, monitoring and measurement, and continuous improvement. Each dimension was assessed across five maturity levels, from ad hoc to optimized. Descriptive and comparative analysis examined maturity levels 4–5 and positive responses to identify disparities between operational preparedness and analytical capabilities within organizations.

## Results and discussion

The findings indicate that **BCM maturity in surveyed enterprises is not low, but uneven.** Highest proportion of maturity levels 4–5 was recorded for operational plans and actions (66.7%), while strategy and leadership, processes and procedures, and resources and competencies each reached 60.0%. Lower results were observed for continuous improvement (46.7%) and monitoring and measurement (43.3%). Risk analysis and business impact analysis (BIA) showed the weakest profile, with 30.0% of firms reaching levels 4–5, although 56.7% assessed this area at level 3. This suggests that **analytical practices are present but not strongly integrated with planning and risk management**. A similar imbalance appears in specific practices: 70.0% reported regular backups and tested recovery procedures, while 66.7% had formal continuity plans, training, and crisis teams. By contrast, KPI/KRI systems operated in 46.7% of firms, redundancy measures in 40.0%, and full BIA in 30.0%.

Thus, **RQ1** is answered negatively: BCM maturity does not develop uniformly. Regarding **RQ2**, the largest gap lies between procedural-operational preparedness and analytical capacity. The 36.7 percentage-point difference between operational planning and risk analysis/BIA suggests that reactive readiness develops faster than proactive analytical capabilities. This does not indicate an absence of risk analysis, but its limited translation into integrated planning and monitoring. Firms may therefore appear operationally prepared while remaining vulnerable because critical dependencies are not fully incorporated into continuity decisions.

## Conclusions

The study reveals uneven rather than generally low BCM maturity. Operational plans, formal procedures, competencies, and disruption-response mechanisms are relatively advanced, while BIA, KPI/KRI monitoring, critical supplier analysis, and resource redundancy remain weaker. This supports a multidimensional assessment of BCM maturity because aggregated measures may conceal important analytical gaps. Managerially, BCM development should therefore move beyond plans and training toward stronger integration of BIA with operational planning, systematic KPI/KRI use, supplier criticality assessment, and verification of alternative resources. **The study is limited** by a small purposive sample (N=30), its focus on medium-sized and large dairy enterprises, self-reported management data, and a cross-sectional design. **Future studies should** use larger cross-sector samples, audit-based evidence, and longitudinal approaches to examine whether more balanced BCM maturity improves disruption mitigation.

## References

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